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Conference Abstract

NBN Atlas: Making data work for nature

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Abstract

The National Biodiversity Network (NBN) Atlas is the United Kingdom's (UK) largest repository of publicly available biodiversity data, with more than 200 million records of almost 50,000 species. It is the largest Living Atlas installation and has been customised considerably to meet the needs of the UK biological recording community. The main customisation was the addition of support for Ordnance Survey grid references as the location of the occurrence, which was added to the core Atlas of Living Australia (ALA) code. UK-specific customisations include authorised access to the supplied location of sensitive records in downloads and an updated species search to better implement the UK Species Inventory, which is the taxonomic backbone of the NBN Atlas.

The biggest source of records is from the professionals and volunteers working with the National Recording Schemes and Societies and environmental non-governmental organizations (eNGOs). We also receive a substantial number of records from government agencies, Local Environmental Record Centres, museums, and botanical gardens across the UK. Currently we don't receive many records from universities or research organisations, however they are one of the biggest consumers of NBN Atlas records across all sectors. We will discuss the challenges of managing record collation from such a broad range of data providers to meet the data requirements of all users, and how we are upgrading the NBN Atlas to the latest version of the ALA platform, whilst maintaining the UK customisations in a separate code layer.

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